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## *If You Have Children....*

Children under 5 years of age are 2.3 times as likely to die in a home fire than the population as a whole. And, home fires and burns are the leading cause of home-related deaths for children in the same age range.

Children are often the innocent victims of fire because they become scared and confused. Make sure to teach your children that a smoke detector signals a fire in the home, and that they are able to recognize its alarm. Teach them that if they ever hear the sound of the alarm, they are to get out of the house immediately and not go back for any reason.

Make sure that your children understand that they are never to try to hide from fire in their rooms or in a closet.

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# **Remember: Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery.**

**It could save your life.**

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SmkDet.P65

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
James E. McGreevey  
*Governor*



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
Susan Bass Levin  
*Commissioner*



*For more information about smoke detectors  
or fire safety, contact your local fire department.*

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# **Smoke Detectors Are Life Protectors!**



NEW JERSEY  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
Lawrence Petrillo  
*Director*

## ***Smoke Detectors Are Life Protectors!***

*Fire officials consider smoke detectors the most effective low-cost fire protection devices you can buy. Used properly, they can double your chance of surviving an accidental house fire.*

***Every*** year in the U.S., non-working smoke detectors are a factor in many of the thousands of deaths and injuries caused by home fires. The actual number of home fire deaths and injuries is difficult to pinpoint, but studies indicate that there are approximately 5,000 deaths and over 100,000 injuries.

***Although*** smoke detectors are in 82% of American homes, nearly one-third do not work because of worn or missing batteries.

***In*** a recent survey, half of the 1,000 respondents mistakenly believed that they would be awakened by the smell of smoke in time to escape. In reality, smoke disorients people, dulls their senses, and makes them lose consciousness because it contains carbon monoxide, which can even be fatal. This is one reason why most people die of smoke inhalation in home fires rather than of burns. And the peak time for home fire fatalities is between 2 AM and 5 AM - when most people are asleep!



***Smoke detectors*** sound a loud, piercing alarm when they detect smoke from a fire, which alerts you to the danger of fire (even when you're asleep) and increases your chances of survival by providing early warning, critical extra time to escape, and additional time for the fire department to save your property. By properly installing and maintaining smoke detectors on each level of your home, you double your chances of surviving a fire! Smoke detectors can be purchased at your local hardware or home center store, and in many leading discount and department stores.

Every home should have at least one smoke detector on every level. For additional protection, smoke detectors should be placed in the hallway outside bedroom areas; inside every bedroom where a smoker sleeps; inside rooms where portable heaters are being used; and inside bedrooms where people sleep with the doors closed. Detectors should be installed as close to the center of the ceiling as possible. To prevent nuisance alarms, put up smoke detectors at least 20 feet away from kitchens, furnaces, hot water heaters and space heaters.

## ***Maintenance Of Your Smoke Detectors***

A smoke detector that doesn't work because of dead batteries is the same as having no smoke detector at all. To keep your smoke detector working as your guardian against fire, you should adopt a simple and easy habit: changing your smoke detector batteries when clocks change back from daylight-savings time each fall. Just remember: "**Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery.**" It will keep your smoke detector operating properly and cut the risk of dying in a home fire by nearly half.

Immediately after installing fresh batteries, make sure the smoke detector still works by pushing the test button.

To insure proper performance, you should also vacuum the grill on your smoke detector once a month to remove dust and cobwebs, which can impair sensitivity.

## ***Testing Your Detector***

Like any other electro-mechanical device, smoke detectors have a limited life span and become subject to breakdown and failure as they age. This is why it is important to test your detectors on a weekly basis. Designate one day of the week for smoke detector testing and test by simply depressing the test button.

If your smoke detectors were installed 7-10 years ago, you may need to consider replacing them.